

# Democracy Commission Small Grants

## *Program Guide*

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### **GENERAL OVERVIEW**

The Democracy Commission Small Grants Program was initiated in 1994 as a flexible mechanism to enable American Embassies to support the development of democracy in Central and Eastern Europe, Eurasia, and the CIS. The Democracy Commission in Moldova started its activity in 1996.

Grants are awarded mainly to non-governmental, non-profit organizations (NGOs). To be eligible for consideration, every applicant must be engaged in, or intend to carry out a project whose purpose is to further the development of democracy and open society in Moldova.

The Democracy Commission acts as the implementing body and includes members of most of the U.S. Government agencies active in Moldova. The Public Affairs Section administers the program.

Grants are awarded on a competitive basis. Decisions are based on the eligibility and quality of the grant application. Once approved by the Democracy Commission in Chisinau, the application undergoes a technical review and receives final approval by the Department of State in Washington, D.C. The final review ensures compliance with program requirements and allowable expenses and accuracy of budgets.

## MAIN REQUIREMENTS

### Who May apply?

Applications must come from registered Moldovan non-governmental and non-commercial organizations, or independent mass media. American and third-country organizations and individuals are not eligible. Projects can only be submitted by organizations, not by individuals. Government agencies, businesses and commercial institutions are not eligible.

Potential applicants are not eligible to apply or be awarded a grant if:

- They are guilty of serious misrepresentation in their application;
- They are deemed to have performed poorly in previous narrative or fiscal reporting for the U.S. - sponsored or other grants;
- They have inappropriate contact with Democracy Commission members while their application is pending;
- They advocate violence in any form.

### What Projects Can Be Supported?

The Commission prefers to support complete projects instead of individual activities, such as conferences, publications or roundtables. A complete project involves a series of events designed to achieve specific goals within a particular time frame, focusing on target audiences and leading to concrete and measurable results that will directly benefit the local community.

### Themes:

The Democracy Commission Small Grants Program supports democracy-building initiatives that promote civil society in Moldova, such as projects targeting:

- Institutionalization of open, pluralistic, and democratic political processes at the local level;
- Public participation in decision making;
- Independent media, free flow of information, transparency in government;
- Civic education, strengthening and promotion of civil society and democratic institutions;
- Conflict resolution;

The Democracy Commission Small Grants Program **CANNOT** fund:

- Humanitarian assistance or charitable activities
- Political or partisan activities
- Scientific research; conferences and/or individual trips abroad
- Trade activities
- Health programs
- Projects aimed at primary institutional development of the organization
- U.S. organizations and individuals

Grants are made on a one-time basis. An organization may re-apply for a second grant after the completion of the previous grant.

#### *Geographic Areas:*

The Democracy Commission welcomes projects from all regions of Moldova, and encourages projects with activities outside of larger cities. There are no specific geographical priorities or limitations except that the project is implemented in Moldova.

#### *Eligible time period:*

The time frame for the project should not exceed 12 months.

#### *Eligible size of grants:*

The maximum grant is \$24,000. However, most awards are much smaller.

#### *Eligible costs:*

Only costs necessary for carrying out the project will be considered for funding. Long-term infrastructure needs that support the operation of an applicant organization will not be funded. Salaries, administrative expenses, and purchase of equipment should be linked to specific project activities, and the need for these items for the project should be explained. Depending on the specifics of the project proposal, can such categories as coffee breaks, food, receptions, salaries or other types of payment may be covered.

All eligible costs must be real itemized costs and cannot take the form of lump sums. More details about eligible costs can be found in the application instructions.

## SUBMISSION OF PROJECTS

Applicants must complete the standard application form in English. The forms are available for download on the website.

If you need assistance, contact Stelian Rusu at (+373 22) 22-99-50 or [rusus@state.gov](mailto:rusus@state.gov).

Applicants must read carefully the instructions provided on the website before filling out and submitting the application.

Applicants must submit the following items:

- Completed electronic version of the application using format provided on the website (mandatory)
- List of founders and board members (mandatory)
- CVs of the implementation team members (mandatory)
- Detailed work-plan (optional)
- Bylaws of the organization (optional)
- Evidence of the organization's previous activity (optional)
- CV of the organization (optional)
- Letters of support (optional)
- Additional information about the project (optional)
- Partnership agreements, etc. (optional)

Electronic version of the application should be e-mailed to the following e-mail addresses:

To: [RusuS@state.gov](mailto:RusuS@state.gov)

CC: [pasgrants@gmail.com](mailto:pasgrants@gmail.com)

Subject: DEMCOM + NGO Name

Applications submitted over the deadline will be disqualified.

Absolutely no exceptions will be made.

### *Deadlines:*

The Democracy Commission reviews applications once every three months. The deadline for a particular round can be confirmed by checking our website and/or press releases.

The complete grant process (from the time a project proposal is submitted to the Democracy Commission to the time the funds are available for use) takes approximately three to four months.

## SELECTION PROCESS

The Democracy Commission, which is made up of senior officials of the U.S. Embassy in Chisinau, examines the project proposals and recommends selected projects for funding. The U.S. Department of State in Washington D.C. confirms the decision. Project proposals are selected on the basis of an open competition four times a year.

Project selection is competitive. Proposals are judged on the following criteria:

- Social importance of the project
- Sustainability and opportunities for development
- Clearly formulated goals and target groups
- Specific and concrete results
- Feasibility

The full proposal should be prepared with great care, for a poorly prepared proposal will be rejected, even if the idea is a good one.

The Democracy Commission will fund the proposals that best address the Commission's themes and reflect the values of the United States and the mandate of the Embassy and the Democracy Commission. Winning proposals will contain accurate and well-developed implementation plans and clear explanations of how the project goals will be achieved.

The decisions of the Democracy Commission are final.

## NOTIFICATION OF APPLICANTS

Throughout the process, applicants will receive several kinds of notifications.

**Project proposal receipt:** The applicant will receive an e-mail notification when the project proposal is received and entered into the system. Applicants are discouraged from calling and checking if the application was received. Applicants may also check the application status section of the website.

**Results:** The results will be communicated electronically once the application is reviewed. You can also check the status of the application on the website. Semifinalists will be contacted and informed about further actions.

**The Democracy Commission will not provide reasons for rejection.**

**Additional Information:** The program coordinator will contact the applicant if there are questions. Therefore, it is very important that you provide accurate contact information. Applications for which we are unable to obtain additional information in a timely manner will be refused.